

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 1814

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CS, NU, VE
SUBJECT: GROUP OF TWELVE ALLEGEDLY HAVING DIFFICULTIES RESTRAINING
FSLN TERCARIOS FROM VIOLENCE

REF: SAN JOSE 1653 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: EMILIO BALTODANO, A MEMBER OF THE ANTISOMOZA "GROUP OF TWELVE", REPORTEDLY SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH THERE CAN BE NO DIALOGUE WITH SOMOZA, THERE COULD BE A NATIONAL DIALOGUE WHICH WOULD INCLUDE SOME GUARDIA NACIONAL ELEMENTS; THAT THERE IS DANGER OF RADICAL LEFTWING ELEMENTS GAINING THE UPPER HAND IN NICARAGUA; AND THAT SUCH A DEVELOPMENT COULD LEAD TO CIVIL WAR. BALTODANO ALLEGEDLY CLAIMED THAT THE CAPTURE LAST WEEK OF AN FSLN LEADER IN COSTA RICA WAS AN EMBARRASSMENT TO A HIGH GOCR OFFICIAL AND THAT THE FSLN CONTINUES TO HAVE ADEQUATE FINANCING FOR ITS ANTI-SOMOZA ACTIVITIES. HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT PEREZ HAD OFFERED TO TRY TO ARRANGE A MEETING BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWELVE AND PRESIDENT CARTER DURING LATTER'S RECENT VISIT TO CARACAS. END SUMMARY

1. A PRO-U.S. SOURCE WHO IS BELIEVED TO REPORT RELIABLY WHAT HE HEARS TOLD EMBOFF APRIL 17 ABOUT CONVERSATION SOURCE HAD HAD LAST WEEK WITH EMILIO BALTODANO, MEMBER OF "GROUP OF TWELVE" PROMINENT
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NICARAGUANS WHO HAVE TAKEN OUTSPOKEN ANTI-SOMOZA STAND FROM SELF-IMPOSED EXILE. CONVERSATION TOOK PLACE IN SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA.

2. BALTODANO REPORTEDLY MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO NICARAGUA:

(A) THE GROUP OF TWELVE BELIEVES THAT THERE CAN BE NO DIALOGUE WITH

PRESIDENT SOMOZA OR HIS IMMEDIATE ENTOURAGE. A NATIONAL DIALOGUE COULD, HOWEVER, TAKEPLACE WHICH WOULD INCLUDE ALL PARTIES, THE FSLN, AND EVEN SOME GUARDIA NACIONAL (GN) OFFICERS. BALTOBANA HAS MISGIVINGS ABOUT GN PARTICIPATION IN SUCH A DIALOGUE BUT SAID SOME OF THE FSLN LEADERS FEEL THAT THERE ARE A FEW "GOOD" PEOPLE IN THE GUARDIA.

(B) THE TWELVE IS HAVING SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN PERSUADING THE TERCARIO FACTION OF THE FSLN GUERRILLAS TO REFRAIN FROM FURTHER VIOLENCE.

(C) PART OF THE PRICE THE TWELVE HAS HAD TO PAY IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN SOME CREDIBILITY WITH THE TERCARIO FACTION IS TO JOIN THE LATTER IN DEMANDING THE EXPRPRIATION OF PRESIDENT SOMOZA'S PERSONAL PROPERTY IN NICARAGUA. SOURCE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT BALTOBANO ENVISAGED EXPROPRIATION OF PROPERTIES BELONGING TO PRESIDENT SOMOZA'S RELATIVES. (COMMENT: A RECENT MANIFESTO PUBLISHED BY THE TWELVE SPEAKS OF CONFISCATING ILLEGALLY ACQUIRED SOMOZA PROPERTIES).

(D) THE TWELVE IS VERY FEARFUL THAT LEFTIST RADICALS MAY GAIN THE UPPER HAND IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL MANEUVERING IN NICARAGUA, AND THAT SUCH A DEVELOPMENT COULD LEAD TO CIVIL WAR. IF CIVIL WAR DEVELOPED, BALTOBANO OPINED, IT WOULD BE TOO LATE FOR THE USG TO DO ANYTHING TO RESOLVE NICARAGUA'S POLITICAL CRISIS.

3. REGARDING THE RECENT ARREST OF AN FSLN LEADER IN SAN JOSE, BALTOBANO ALLEGEDLY SAID:
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(A) A GROUP OF THE FSLN HAD BEEN RECIEVING GUERRILLA TRAINING IN SAN JOSE WHEN SOMEONE, "PROBABLY A SOMOCISTA" (PRO-SOMOZA) INFILTRATOR AMONG THE TRAINEES, BETRAYED THE GROUP TO COSTA RICAN AUTHORITIES

A PROMINENT GOCR OFFICIAL, IN TURN, TIPPED OFF THE FSLN THAT A RAID OF THE TRAINING FACILITY WOULD BE STAGED. THE FSLN IMMEDIATELY EVACUATED ITS PEOPLE, EQUIPMENT AND DOCUMENTS FROM THE TRAINING SITE SO THAT NOTHING WOULD BE FOUND WHEN THE COSTA RICAN RADID TOOK PLACE.

(B) ONE FSLN MEMBER RETURNED TO THE TRAINING SITE TO RECOVER A MORTAR WHICH HAD INADVERTENTLY BEEN LEFT BEHIND. THAT MEMBER WAS CAPTURED AT THE SITE.

(C) THE SENIOR GOCR OFFICIAL WHO HAD TIPPED OFF THE FLSN ABOUT THE FORTHCOMING RAID WOULD HAVE RETURNED THE MORTAR QUIETLY TO THE FSLN, BUT COULD NOT DO SO AFTER THE CAPTURED FSLN MEMBER REVEALED DETAILS OF THE TRAINING AND FSLN PLANS TO THE PRESS. (COMMENT: THIS ALLEGED INCIDENT SEEMS TO ACCORD IN SOME RESPECTS WITH THE REPORT OF THE CAPTURE OF FSLN LEADER PLUTARCO HERNANDEZ, DESCRIBED IN REFTEL.)

(D) THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRAINING SITE MAY SET BACK FSLN PLANS TO LAUNCH ANOTHER ANTI-SOMOZA ATTACK INTO NICARAGUA PRIOR TO THE INAUGURATION OF NEW COSTA RICAN PRESIDENT CARAZO TWO WEEKS HENCE.

4. BALTODANO SAID THAT THE FSLN IS HAVING NO PROBLEMS IN GETTING FUNDS FOR ITS ANTI-SOMOZA ACTIVITIES.

5. RE VENEZUELA, BALTODANO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT PEREZ HAD ARRANGED FOR AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO VENEZUELA VAKY TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWELVE SOME TIME AGO, AND THAT PEREZ HAD ALSO OFFERED TO TRY TO SET UP A MEETING BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWELVE AND PRESIDENT CARTER DURING LATTER'S RECENT VISIT TO VENEZUELA

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BALTODANO SAID THE TWELVE HAD DECLINED MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER.

6. COMMENT: THE TWELVE, WHEN THEY PROCLAIMED THEIR MOVEMENT AFTER LAST OCTOBER'S FSLN ATTACKS, APPARENTLY SAW THEMSELVES AS ABLE TO ESTABLISH A LEADERSHIP ROLE OVER THE TERCARIO FACTION OF THE FSLN, A NUCLEUS FOR A FUTURE POPULAR, PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT AND A BRIDGE BETWEEN PRIVATE SECTOR OPPOSITIONIST IN NICARAGUA AND THE TERCARIO SANDINISTAS. IT APPEARS NOW THAT THE GROUP OF TWELVE IS ENCOUNTERING DIFFICULTIES IN CONTROLLING THE TERCARIOS AND INSTEAD OF BEING THE FOCAL POINT OF PRIVATE SECTOR ANTI-SOMOZA ACTIVISM, IT HAS BEEN LARGELY LEFT OUT OF THE ACTION BECAUSE OF THE GROUP'S ABSENCE FROM MANAGUA. THE TWELVE DOES, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO HAVE IMPORTANCE AS A BRIDGE FOR PRIVATE SECTOR-FSLN CONTACT.

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